

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 133926

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO CAPE TOWN, DURBAN,
GABORONE, JOHANNESBURG, LONDON, MASERU, MBABANE
FROM PRETORIA JUL 06.

QUOTE PRETORIA 2315.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SF, US

SUBJECT: SAG OFFICIALS ATTEND EMBASSY'S MULTIRACIAL
FOURTH OF JULY RECEPTION

1. FOR FIRST TIME SINCE LATE PRIME MINISTER VERWOERD'S
TIME, SENIOR SAG OFFICIALS ATTENDED AMBASSADOR'S MULTI-
RACIAL JULY 4 RECEPTION THIS YEAR, THUS ENDING SAG'S
LONG-STANDING BAN ON ATTENDANCE AT SUCH FUNCTIONS.

2. FOLLOWING A DECISION TAKEN AT HIGHEST LEVELS OF
GOVERNMENT, SAG AUTHORIZED NUMBER OF SENIOR OFFICIALS
TO ATTEND AMBASSADOR'S RECEPTION, DESPITE KNOWLEDGE
THAT MANY OF GUESTS WOULD BE NON-WHITE (IN THE EVENT,
ONE-THIRD OF THE 300 GUESTS WERE AFRICAN, COLORED
AND INDIAN). NEW DISPENSATION EFFECTIVELY UNDERCUTS BAN
ON OFFICIAL SAG ATTENDANCE AT MULTIRACIAL FUNCTIONS,
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PAGE 02 STATE 133926

SUCH AS QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY AND JULY FOURTH. BAN WAS

BASED ON VIEW THAT INTERRACIAL MINGLING WAS COUNTER TO COUNTRY'S TRADITIONS, AND HAD BEEN PUBLICLY REAFFIRMED AS RECENTLY AS LAST YEAR BY FOREIGN MINISTER MULLER.

3. OFFICIALS ATTENDING JULY FOURTH WERE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS BRAND FOURIE AND THREE DFA UNDER SECRETARIES: OWEN BOOYSEN, DAVID DU BUISSON, AND JOHN KINCAID. SAG WAS PREPARED TO AUTHORIZE ATTENDANCE BY A CABINET MINISTER AND NATIONAL PARTY MPS HAD ANY OF THESE BEEN AVAILABLE ON SHORT NOTICE IN PRETORIA.

4. ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS HAS NOTED ATTENDANCE BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS BUT HAS BEEN RESTRAINED IN TREATMENT OF STORY. THUS FAR, AFRIKAANS PRESS HAS NOT CARRIED STORY. SAG HAS MADE NO DEFINITIVE STATEMENT AS YET ALTHOUGH AT SOME POINT, PERHAPS DURING THE 1974 SESSION OF PARLIAMENT, IT CAN BE EXPECTED TO CLARIFY ITS POSITION. IN MEANTIME, PRESS HAS NOTED THAT FOREIGN SECRETARY FOURIE ATTENDED WITH FONMIN MULLER'S APPROVAL. MULLER REPORTEDLY DECLINED TO COMMENT ON WHETHER THE VERWOERD BAN HAD BEEN COMPLETELY ABANDONED.

5. COMMENT: SAG HAS BEEN UNDER INCREASING POLITICAL PRESSURE FROM BOTH OPPOSITION AND GOVERNMENT CIRCLES TO LIFT EMBARRASSING BAN ON OFFICIAL ATTENDANCE AT MULTI-RACIAL FUNCTIONS. IN HIS STATEMENT IN PARLIAMENT LAST YEAR, MULLER MADE CLEAR THAT SAG WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO SOCIAL MINGLING WITH FOREIGN BLACK VIPS. HE SAID IT WAS ONLY WITH BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS THAT PROBLEMS AROSE. AND EARLIER THIS YEAR TWO DFA OFFICIALS QUIETLY ATTENDED BRITISH EMBASSY'S RECEPTION ON QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY, AT WHICH A FEW SOUTH AFRICAN BLACKS WERE GUESTS. IT REMAINS BE SEEN HOW FAR AND FAST SAG WILL GO WITH ITS NEW FLEXIBILITY. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON PUBLIC REACTION TO JULY FOURTH RECEPTION. THIS, AS NOTED ABOVE, HAS THUS FAR BEEN RESTRAINED. HURD
UNQUOTE ROGERS

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